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Terry Goddard Asks Hollywood Movie Studios To Add Anti-Smoking Message to DVDs

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Nov. 16, 2005) Attorney General Terry Goddard announced today he is urging Hollywood's major motion picture studios to insert anti-smoking public service announcements (PSAs) in all DVDs and other home viewing formats of movies in which smoking is depicted. Goddard joined Attorneys General representing 31 other states and the District of Columbia in making the request. Letters were sent to studio executives representing Disney, Dreamworks, Fox, MGM, Miramax, New Line, Paramount, Sony, Warner Brothers and Universal.

The letters were prompted by the Nov. 7 publication of a major study which found that children between 10 and 14 who watched popular movies with the greatest number of smoking scenes were almost three times more likely to try smoking than their peers in the least exposed group. The correlation held even after controlling for other known smoking initiation factors.

The study, which appeared in the journal Pediatrics, was conducted by the Dartmouth Medical School with funding from National Cancer Institute. It is the first study to determine the effects of viewing smoking in movies on a nationally representative sample of youth in the United States.

Goddard's letter noted that an anti-smoking PSA currently is being produced by the American Legacy Foundation, funded by money from the states' 1998 tobacco Master Settlement Agreement in cooperation with Hollywood's Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Will Rogers Institute. The ad campaign will run theaters across the United States.

"This study demonstrates...that exposure to movie smoking has a strong association with smoking initiation, and that the association holds within broad racial and ethnic categories, regardless of where the adolescent resides," the Attorneys General said in the letter to studio executives.

The Attorneys General have been meeting with representatives from the movie industry over the last two years about the impact of movie smoking on young people.

“Given the increasing number of movies on DVDs, videos and now UMDs, the timing is right to ask the studios to take this specific action to help protect kids from the effects of viewing smoking in the movies they watch at home,” the letter concluded.

The Attorneys General from Maryland, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and West Virginia signed onto the letters.

Attached is a copy of the letters sent.

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